



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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IM Weekly Highlights



- Sheriff Edwards, Garfield County, met with IM staff at Browns Divide to finalize site location.
- IM met with Dawson County Commissioner and road department officials to finalize plans for the Belle Prairie site development.
- A Purchase Order was issued for the MacDonald Pass to Helena Armory microwave hop, which will provide the necessary connectivity back to the master controller for upcoming PSIC-funded microwave projects.

Getting the Word Out about IM

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Many folks affiliated with Montana's Interoperability Montana (IM) Project recently received an e-mail from Ian Marquand, IM's Public Affairs and Outreach Consultant, updating them about recent IM outreach efforts. The list was so impressive, your editor decided to repeat the information here. Please read on:

- Information on IM, including the IM 2009 Build - Out Report, has been sent to all 337 people who filed as candidates for the Montana legislature in this year's election, as well as all candidates who filed for Montana's seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Most of the candidates received the information via e-mail, while those who did not provide e-mail addresses to the Secretary of State were sent information by regular mail.
- Newspaper guest editorials have appeared in *The Missoulian*, *The Billings Gazette*, *The Great Falls Tribune*, and *The Montana (Butte) Standard*. The same piece has been distributed to all newspapers in the Northern Tier Consortium and to IM Project Directors who chose to disseminate it within their own geographic areas.
- Public radio stations in Missoula and Billings aired stories about IM in March following interviews with IM Executive Director Kevin Bruski. (In Missoula, the city's assistant fire chief and SIEC member, Jeff Logan, joined Kevin for the interview.)
- The story on Montana Public Radio (KUFM) aired March 11, while the Billings story aired on

Yellowstone Public Radio (KEMC) on March 17. Together, the stories reached a statewide audience. Both stories are archived on those stations' respective websites: www.mtpr.org and www.yellowstonepublicradio.org.

- A television interview with Flathead County Commissioner/IM First Vice-Chair Joe Brenneman and Glacier County Sheriff/Northern Tier Project Director Wayne Dusterhoff is scheduled to air on Sunday morning, April 25 on the "Face the State" program on Montana's CBS network affiliates.
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Technical Committee Elects New Vice Chair

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Jason Norman, Montana Dept. of Transportation Electronic Equipment Technician, was elected as the new Vice Chair of the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) at its Mon., March 22, meeting in Helena.

Members were briefed on a number of items, which included Scott Bradford's monthly report from the frequency sub-committee. He told the group of plans to seek additional VHF frequency resources through FCC auctions and federal partnerships. In addition, members discussed interference problems caused by self-quieting frequencies in Motorola radios, and passed a motion to request the IM Project Directors ask Motorola to commit to correcting all the trunked sites across the state that have problems with self-quieting frequencies on any model of mobile or portable radio.

Dale Osborne, Encryption Sub-Committee Chair, said that the Policy Instrument Waiver Request is in process to seek permission to remain on the DES-OFB standard while making future plans to adopt the AES 256 standard. Roger Smith, Network Connectivity Sub-Committee Chair, reported on the Northern Tier microwave system, and explained that as soon as the Plentywood to Flaxville hop issue is fixed, the Northern Tier can begin its 60-day acceptance period with Aviat (formerly Harris Stratex.) He also is working with Aviat on latency and connectivity issues with the ProVision microwave monitoring system, which needs to be functional before beginning the 60-day acceptance period with Aviat. Vast improvements have been made on IP addressing and network schemes for TruPoint and Eclipse nodes. The ProVision system should be fully

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functional soon. Two other issues also need to be resolved before the acceptance period can begin: replacements of El-tech rectifiers and generator reliability.

Roger also reported that the U.S. Air Force currently is using all seven sites that it had planned to use as part of its partnership with the IM and the Central Consortium. The MOU for the alarm notification system with Lewis and Clark County is now signed, and the Motorola Version 7.6 upgrade is now complete. All the award letters for repeaters for Eastern Tier consortium members have been signed and equipment has been ordered. Coverage testing is taking place in Gallatin County.

Dorothy Gremaux, Dispatch Connectivity Chair, will be working with the sub-committee to develop a list of criteria for how a dispatch center can be upgraded to a Trunking Enable System Answering Point (TrESAP). For example, a Motorola 7500 console is needed as well as microwave connectivity. The document also will outline duties of local dispatch centers that plan to operate as a TrESAP, such as having a system administrator.

Bob McWilliams, IMTC Chair, reported on the outcome of the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) recommendations for DHS FY2010 grant funds, which are posted at: <http://dma.mt.gov/des/>. These funding recommendations impact the IM Build-Out Plan.

Larry Houlihan, TWE Enterprises Representative from Billings, explained the advantages and disadvantages of liquid-propane-fueled generators and answered several technical questions regarding generator issues along the Northern Tier.

The next IMTC meeting is scheduled for Mon., April 26, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the BLM Offices at 5001 Southgate Ave., in Billings.

State Agency Radio Users Task Force

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Last Nov., state agency radio users participated in a workshop to examine recommendations of the legislative performance audit that was conducted on the statewide radio communications interoperability project in Jan., 2009. The audit report, located at: <http://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/Audit/Report/08P-03.pdf>, provided specific recommendations regarding state agency resources and participation in the IM Project.

As a result of that meeting, a State Agency Radio Users Task Force was formed, chaired by Garrett Fawaz, Dept of Corrections Emergency Manager. The group has been meeting on a monthly basis since then, and has made significant progress. For example, it has adopted the Communications Asset Survey and Mapping Tool (CASM), national inventory software tool that the State of Montana can use to document and analyze its communications resources. More than 50 states and urban areas currently utilize CASM as a

tool for interoperability planning and analysis. Coordination work is taking place to sponsor CASM training sessions around the state for local, state and tribal jurisdictions.

Members learned that the waiver request to remain on the DES-OFB encryption standard (while working toward a migration to the new AES 256 standard) is in the process of being submitted to Dick Clark, the State of Montana's Chief Information Officer. Garrett presented costs of updating radios to the AES standard, which are considerable. Members discussed the importance of having strong Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that clearly outline when encryption will and will not be used.

Carl Hotvedt, PSSB, distributed a spreadsheet that outlined costs of state agency compliance with the 2013 FCC narrowbanding mandate. He also reported that \$50,000 of DHS FY2010 funds were set aside to assist state agencies with narrowband upgrades. Kyle Hilmer, ITSD, updated the group on work being accomplished by the IM Funding Sub-Committee and the status of the draft IM Business Plan. The issue of user fees was discussed in detail as well as System User Agreements. Kyle stressed the importance of hearing from state agencies about what services need to be provided for full agency participation in the IM system.

PSSB is in the process of evaluating and reviewing the Mutual Aid Handbook, and Scott Bradford, PSSB, gave a briefing on frequencies.

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, April 27 from 9:00 to 11:00 am at the Old Livestock Building, 125 E. Locket Ave., in Helena.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Wed., March 31** *(Please Note New Day, Time and Date)*
Eastern Tier Consortium
Glendive • 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Law Enforcement Center
440 Colorado Blvd.
- **Wed., March 31**
Mobile Data Terminal Consortium
Bozeman • 10:00 am – noon
Gallatin County EOC, 219 E. Tamarack
- **Thurs., April 1**
IM Funding Sub-Committee Meeting
Billings • 1:00 pm
Billings Police Dept. Training Center, 4810 Midland Rd.
- **Wed., April 14**
South Central Montana Consortium (SCIMC)
Big Timber • 10:00 am - noon
Carnegie Library, 314 McLeod St.
- **Wed. & Thurs. April 21 & 22**
Blueprint for Excellence
Strategic Planning Session – By invitation
Helena • 8:00 am - 5:00 pm (both days)
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.